

SELECTIONS.

WHAT HINDERS YOU?

My young friend, this frank question comes home to your conscience, "What hinders you from becoming a Christian?" Though you may not reply with your lips, yet your inner man might speak out if it could, and honestly say, "I am afraid of ridicule. They will laugh at me."

But *who* will laugh at you? Will your parents laugh at you? I hope they are praying for you. Will your "best friends" laugh at you? Then they do not deserve the name; they are really your soul's enemies. But your companions, your shopmates, or your schoolmates may sneer at you. Suppose they do what then? Is not every good act, and every noble act, liable to sneers? Will you always continue to be shamed out of your eternal happiness by the short-lived "laughter of fools"? Was not your Divine Master scoffed at and reviled beyond measure? Did He not endure contempt for you? And will you refuse to bear a little harmless ridicule for Him? Ah, my friend! it is better to endure a silly sneer or two in this world, than to "awake to shame" and everlasting self-contempt in the hour of judgment! It is better to be "despised" by a few light-headed scoffers here, than to despise and loathe and abhor yourself, and to be abhorred of God, to all eternity.

But perhaps you say, "Youth is no time for psalm-singing and gloom. It is the time for merriment." Well, my dear mistaken friend, I do not ask you to be gloomy; it is *the very thing I want to deliver you from*. "Gloom!" Is it a gloomy thing to have your sins forgiven? Is it a gloomy thing to have a good conscience? Is it a sad state to be in fellowship with Christ, and an heir of Heaven? Is it a melancholy business to sing God's praises, or to labor for God's glory—to be busy in doing good—in relieving misery, and blessing souls?

Ah! I will tell you what *is* a "gloomy" thing, enough to draw tears from a stone. It is a gloomy sight to see a son or daughter setting out on the perilous voyage of life without chart or compass, in hourly danger of everlasting shipwreck. It is a gloomy sight to see a young man despise salvation. It is a sad sight to see a young maiden "quench the Holy Spirit," and give herself up, head and heart, to the senseless frivolities of the world. It is the saddest of spectacles to behold the slow, steady hardening of a heart in sin—to behold the chains of the destroyer coil closer and tighter every hour about a soul "without God and without hope."

You admit the force of these brief suggestions, and say, "I ought to be a Christian; I mean to be a Christian; *but there is time enough yet*." Who told you so? Has God drawn aside the veil, and revealed to you a long life ahead? Has He given you an assurance that *next year* will be your "accepted time" and your "day of salvation"? You will be harder next year than you are to-day, even if you live to see it. But your "next year" may be spent among the wailings of the lost. The shroud may be already weaving for thee. The "feet of them who are to bear you out" may be almost at "the door."

"Time enough yet!" Where is that young man with whom you made your social calls last New Year's Day? Where is that young girl whose rosy cheek you kissed on her bridal night, a twelve-month since?

The mossy marbles rest
On the lips you then pressed
In their bloom;
And the name you loved to hear
Has been carved this very year
On the tomb!

—The Word and the Way.

The ancient Romans were accustomed to place the busts of their distinguished ancestors in the vestibules of their houses, that they might be continually reminded of their noble deeds. They supposed that a recollection of their illustrious virtues would lead to the imitation of the same by all the living members of their household. There is no doubt that the influence of this practice was most happy upon the living, awakening in many breasts high and noble aspirations. In these days we have no busts of honored ancestors in the porches of our dwellings, out we have something more impressive. The characters of living parents are constantly presented for the imitation of children.

Only in a world of sincere men is unity possible; and there, in the long run it is as good as certain.—*Carlyle*.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is the son of a Methodist minister, yet, as usually happens, he has become a very pronounced Ritualist. In a recent service he wore a long colored garment, and had two boys engaged to help him to carry it gracefully.

WHILE OR BECAUSE, WHICH?

If a Christian arouses hostility and meets opposition *because* he is a follower and a representative of Christ, the Bible has many words of comfort for him. But if a Christian takes all those words of comfort to himself merely because he has aroused hostility and encountered opposition *while* he is a follower and a representative of Christ, he may be wholly in error as to the cause of his troubles, and as to the fitness to his case of the Bible passages to which he has looked for cheer. "Blessed are ye," says Jesus, "when men shall reproach you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely"—"That's *my* case!" says many a man who finds himself reproached and persecuted and slandered; without stopping to consider the added words of Jesus—"for my sake." It is one thing to be hated *while* one belongs to Christ; and it is quite another thing to be hated *because* one belongs to Christ; but the difference between these two things is very often lost sight of by a Christian who is hated. Many a Christian who is offensively progressive and "liberal," finds himself in trouble on every side with those who both differ from him and differ with him: and then he congratulates himself on the trouble he has provoked; because he supposes that it is his fidelity to truth, instead of his obnoxious ways in the advocacy of truth or in the denunciation of error, that has brought him into conflict with others. There are men, Christian men too, whose ways repel others from the cause they advocate; and they are the very men who are the most likely to think that the opposition to them is due to hostility to their cause, instead of perceiving that the opposition to their cause is measurably due to hostility to them. It may be that we suffer for the cause of righteousness' sake; and then again it may be that the cause of righteousness suffers for our sake. In the one case both our cause and ourselves are the gainers; in the other case, both ourselves and our cause are the losers.—*Sunday School Times*.

YOUR CLASS.

It is of no use to go and sit down before your class, pretty, polite, well dressed young lady though you may be, even with your lesson well studied and well arranged in your mind. You *must* get acquainted with your boys, and if one "breaks in" on your fluent sentences with a remark about his "grandmother being awful old and tottery, we are expecting her to drop off any time," don't snub him with a "We will return to the lesson;" for he has to be his grandmother's grandson all the rest of the week, and he ought to be a gentle and respectful one; he will be far more apt to be so if his Sunday school teacher remembers that that boy has a grandmother and enquires for her from time to time. Find out how your boys live at home. Get their ideas on all practical questions suggested by the lesson—and boys, as a rule, are not slow to give them.—and soon you will be able to see which boy is inclined to prevaricate, which is the selfish one, which is the leader, and which is led; which one is under dangerous influence, and which one is the "honor bright" sort of a boy, whose good heart and good temper continually inspire you with new vigor and courage. To the honor of boyhood be it said, he is always there; I never found a class without him.—*Selects*.

SHORT SERMONS FOR BOYS.

Most boys and girls do not like sermons—they say they are too long for their highnesses. Perhaps they may like these short sermons. They will give food to think over, and must not be read too hastily.

A Swedish boy fell out of the window and was badly hurt, but, with clenched lips, he kept back the cry of pain. The king, Gustavus Adolphus, who saw him fall, prophesied that that boy would make a man for an emergency. And so he did, for he became the famous Gen. Bauer.

A boy used to crush the flowers to get their color, and painted the white side of his father's cottage in Tyrol with all sorts of pictures, which the mountaineers gazed at as wonderful. He was the great artist Titian.

An old painter watched a little fellow who amused himself making drawings of his pot and brushes, easel and stool, and said, "That boy will beat me one day." So he did, for he was Michael Angelo.

A German boy was reading a blood-and-thunder novel. Right in the midst of it he said to himself: "Now, this will never do. I get too much excited over it. I can't study so well after it. So here it 'comes!' and he flung the book out into the river. He was Fichte, the great German Philosopher.

Do you know what these little sermons mean? Why, simply this, that in boyhood and girlhood are shown the traits for good or evil which make the man or woman good or not.—*Selects*.

"As wheat or chaff we shall all appear in the great Day of Judgment. There is a machine in the Bank of England which receives sovereigns, as a mill receives grain, for the purpose of determining wholesale whether they are of full weight. As they pass through, the machinery by unerring laws, throws all that are light to one side, and all that are of full weight to another. That process is a silent but solemn parable to me. Founded as it is upon the laws of Nature, it affords the most vivid similitude of the certainty which characterizes the judgment of the great day. There are no mistakes or partialities to which the light may trust; the only hope lies in being of standard weight before they go in."—*Arnol*.

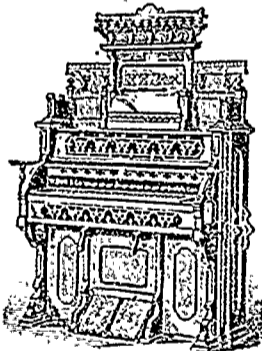
When Dr. John Mason Good was on his death-bed he said, "I have taken what unfortunately the generality of Christians too must take. I have taken the middle walk of Christianity. I have endeavored to live up to its duties and doctrines, but I have lived below its privileges."

God's treasury where He keeps His children's gifts will be like many a mother's store of relics of her children, full of things of no value to others, but precious in His eyes for the love's sake that was in them.—*Fendon*.

A man protesting against error is on the way towards uniting himself with all men that believe in truth.—*Carlyle*.



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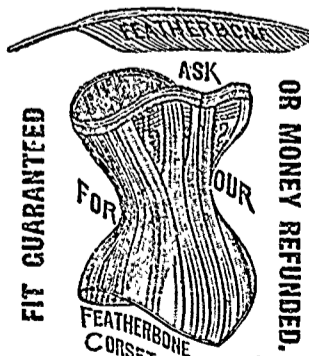
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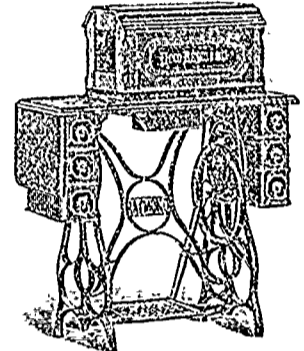
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